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THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS

George Orwell's "1984" describes how, in the advanced Communist society, history is rewritten in a new language called Newspeak, and those pieces of history which the ruling clique wants to be forgotten are dropped down the Memory Hole. We've had a good taste of such tactics of rewriting history during this October, as self-serving has-beens from the Kennedy Administration have been celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 by rewriting its history.

For example, the five top officials of the Kennedy Administration who are still alive (Dean Rusk, Robert McNamara, George W. Ball, Roswell Gilpatric, McGeorge Bundy, and Theodore Sorensen) produced an "essay" for TIME Magazine which rewrites the history of October 1962 and purports to explain its "lessons." The punch line is: "The Cuban Missile Crisis illustrates not the significance but the insignificance of nuclear superiority in the face of survivable thermonuclear retaliatory forces."

That's not the lesson of the Cuban Missile Crisis at all. That's just political propaganda against the Reagan defense budget. The Cuban Missile Crisis proved that nuclear superiority is not only "significant," but absolutely essential to our survival.

Kennedy Administration officials have fostered the mythology that, at a fateful moment in mid-October 1962, Kennedy looked eyeball-to-eyeball with Khrushchev and forced him to blink. Let's review what really happened.

Khrushchev and his co-conspirators Brezhnev and Kosygin made a tremendous investment of money, time and risk in the Cuban Missile project. They spent at least a year on the project, moving 42 offensive missiles by land and sea halfway around the world, unloading them in Cuba a few miles off of Florida, driving them across Cuban roads, and then installing them on their launching pads.

"You and I both know, Mr. President," Khrushchev ominously threatened Kennedy, "what kind of missiles these are." What Khrushchev meant was that they were "soft" unprotected weapons. They were completely vulnerable to any kind of attack; even old-fashioned bombs

could destroy them and ruin Khrushchev's billion-dollar investment. They had to be launched first, or they could serve no purpose at all.

These missiles were a massive and imminent threat to nine-tenths of U.S. strategic forces (as well as all major U.S. cities). In 1962 our SAC strategic bombers represented more than 95 percent of our strategic delivery capability; and all our bomber bases were targeted by Khrushchev's missiles except two in the northwest.

Would Khrushchev have actually fired them? He was a dictator with a morbid preoccupation with nuclear weapons, with threats to use them, and with "burying" people he didn't like. A typical Khrushchev greeting to Western diplomats was, "You know, they say that in order to destroy your country all one needs is 6 H-bombs, perhaps 9 at the most. I have 12, all set aside just for you."

What made Khrushchev back down was not Kennedy's eyeballs, but American nuclear superiority, which was then at a ratio of 8-to-1. Once the U-2 picture taken on October 14 revealed the missiles, SAC Commander-in-Chief Thomas S. Power immediately mounted a great airborne and sling-shot alert and dispersed all our strategic bombers.

Our 40 billion tons of explosive power flying around on airborne alert in U.S. strategic bombers was why Khrushchev blinked. It had nothing to do with Kennedy's eyeballs. As H-bomb inventor Dr. Edward Teller said, "Nuclear power does not mean the end of the world, but it does mean the end of nonnuclear power."

After the Crisis was over, the Russians walked off with "chips" that fully justified the risk Khrushchev had taken. In the Kennedy-Khrushchev agreement immediately made public, Kennedy allowed Castro to remain in Cuba as a Soviet satellite, 90 miles off our shore, and even promised that the United States would prevent any Freedom Fighters from overthrowing him. In a private addendum to the agreement, Kennedy agreed to remove our Thor and Jupiter intermediate-range missiles from their stations in Europe.

Finally, President Kennedy and his officials identified at the start of this column began a progressive dismantling of U.S. strategic weapons systems. They stopped further input into our ongoing production lines, they cancelled development of new strategic systems, and they scrapped 1,400 strategic bombers. This secret policy decision became painfully apparent ten years later in the SALT I Agreement of 1972.

Yes, there are many lessons we can learn from the Cuban Missile Crisis.